

little bit more like we do in Iowa: family and neighbors first, common sense, hard work, and—as always—a little bit of Iowa nice.

TAX EMANCIPATION FOR THE RICH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Madam Speaker, in what seems to be a concession to the most far-right members of the Republican Party, the Republican leadership has scheduled a vote on the alleged FairTax Act that would completely overhaul the tax system to blatantly favor the rich.

The proposed legislation would abolish the Internal Revenue Service and eliminate all Federal taxes, including the estate taxes and corporate income taxes. In place of Federal taxes, the bill would impose an effective 30 percent national sales tax across the board.

The working class would face a substantially higher tax burden as a result, and the richest Americans would receive a sizeable cash reward. It is difficult to overestimate how regressive this tax would be, and according to the tax experts, it would have a wide range of detrimental effects, not just on income taxes but also on items like Affordable Care Act premiums and the child tax credit.

The Republicans claim that they are the party of working people, but they appear to be making an effort to demonstrate that they are absolutely not that. Some of the wealthiest people in our country can pay exceptionally low tax rates, avoid paying taxes on their largest assets, and pass their fortunes on to their children tax-free because of the many ways the tax system is set up to enable corporate taxpayers to avoid paying taxes.

Conservatives have spent decades creating this kind of tax emancipation for the rich while waging a fierce battle against attempts to reinstate tax enforcement against the 1 percent. This just further advantages the wealthy by giving them more opportunities to take advantage of the working class. In Florida's 20th District where the median household income is under \$55,000 a year and families already struggle to make ends meet, the FairTax Act will put my constituents at a unique disadvantage.

There is nothing fair about the FairTax Act. This is a handout to the rich. Americans will feel the weight of this 30 percent sales tax on necessities like food and gas.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reconsider this legislation and work with House Democrats on the most pressing issues that face our country.

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURCHETT. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Colonel Jason M. Brock who served 32 years in the Tennessee Air National Guard.

Colonel Brock began his military career as an enlisted member in 1991 and worked hard during his service to earn a bachelor of science degree from the University of Tennessee in 1994.

In 1998, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. Since then, Colonel Brock has served in a variety of assignments as a logistics readiness officer and a maintenance officer, and has deployed numerous times in support of multiple operations including Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Southern and Northern Watch, Joint Guard, and Noble Eagle.

During his assignment as director of staff for the State of Tennessee Air, he also supported many domestic operations, including Tennessee's military response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Colonel Brock plans to retire this year, and it is a well-earned retirement, Madam Speaker. He plans to spend more time with his wife and his two sons on family outings to the lake and camping. He also has his private pilot license, and he looks forward to enjoying more time in the sky.

Our country's heroes are the men and women of our armed services, like Colonel Brock, who served and sacrificed for our freedom. It is my honor to recognize Colonel Jason Brock as the Tennessee Second District's January 2023 Veteran of the Month.

MIDWAY IGA

Mr. BURCHETT. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Joe and Dale Longmire on selling Midway IGA and retiring from the grocery business.

Claude and Ruby Longmire started Longmire Grocery in Corryton in 1947. They raised Joe and Dale in the grocery business, and they worked very hard in this their entire lives.

In 1988, Madam Speaker, Joe and Dale bought the Midway IGA right there on Tazewell Pike, as you well know.

Joe and Dale say the community has been very good to the Longmires, and the Midway IGA has been very good to the community. They have been great friends of mine. When you go in there, Madam Speaker, local kids work there. They work the counters and they work everywhere. They have some of the best fried chicken—I believe it is actually called broasted fried chicken—that I have ever had, except, of course, what my wife and my sweet mama used to make.

Of course, my family and I trade at the IGA on a regular basis, and the Longmires supported me when I first ran for mayor. They were some of the first people who came out and supported me. They had a fundraiser for me at their house. They live on Emory Road, the same road I live on now. Emory Road is a very long road, Madam Speaker. I actually went to the

wrong end of Emory Road, and I was 1 hour late to my own fundraiser; but it just increased the anticipation of my arrival.

The Longmire brothers have said that nothing about the store will change, which I am very glad to hear. Midway IGA has been great to our community, and I hope we don't lose that.

I wish their sister, Leesa, the best as she sticks around the store as their scanning manager. I wish Joe and his wonderful wife, Becky—who has been a dear friend to me and my girls a long time—and Dale and his wife, Ellen, the best in their retirement.

Joe plans to finish a book he has been researching about the history of Corryton. I look forward to getting an autographed copy which I am sure I will pay dearly for.

PUTTING PEOPLE OVER POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to sound the alarm. Extreme MAGA Republicans have an economic plan that will hurt working families. For 2 years House Democrats have delivered for everyday Americans.

The economic progress that House Democrats and President Biden have led is simply remarkable. So let's talk about this significant growth Democrats have made possible by President Biden's economic plan.

We created 11 million jobs. Under Trump we lost 2.9 million jobs.

The unemployment rate is at 3.5 percent—one of the lowest rates in our history. Under Trump it was 6.3 percent.

We lowered healthcare costs for working families. Under Trump, 3 million more people lost their insurance.

We capped insulin at \$35 for our seniors on Medicare.

We expanded Medicare and Social Security benefits.

This is progress, but this progress is threatened by extreme MAGA Republicans.

□ 1100

While most Americans are worried about post-COVID prices at the grocery store, the extreme MAGA Republicans in charge of the House GOP want to increase the average family's costs for groceries and everyday essentials by hundreds of dollars every month. That is right, Madam Speaker, raising it by hundreds a month.

They are doing this by championing a new 30 percent national sales tax. The House MAGA Republicans would jack up the prices on the products that we rely on. Imagine paying in my district 30 percent more when you go to HEB for your groceries.

This kind of blanket tax increase is failed economic policy that attacks the foundation of our economic growth and hurts working families.

My Republican friends all talk about responsible spending and balanced budgets. Families will not be able to balance their own budgets if the extreme MAGA wing gets its way.

Madam Speaker, we have already witnessed what this so-called leadership looks like. The very first bill the GOP put before the House will make it easier to hand tax breaks to the wealthy and well connected.

They are not just trying to make it easier for the ultrapowerful to pay even less in taxes. Sadly, extreme Republicans want to gut Social Security, eliminate Medicare, and reverse new lower drug prices House Democrats just fought hard to get for working families.

If they have their way, Social Security and Medicare as we know it will end. Working families will lose the benefits they have earned by paying into a system for decades.

In my home district, there are more than 80,000 people living on their Social Security income. That is more than 10 percent of my constituents. These are retired workers, disabled workers, widows, and children who need these critical funds to survive.

Let me repeat: They earned their benefits by paying into the system for many, many decades.

When extreme MAGA Republicans fight and say they don't want to raise the debt limit, I want everyone to know what that really means. It is not economic theory; it is political posturing.

They raised the debt limit every time Trump was in office, and in fact, Trump is responsible for 25 percent of our current debt.

When they say they are going to fight, it really is about hurting people. It would mean Social Security payments won't be sent, and people already living hand to mouth won't get the money they earned. This is totally unacceptable.

The full faith and credit of the United States means more than paying our government's bills on time. It means keeping groceries in the refrigerator and medicine in the cabinet for many people in my district.

House Democrats will continue to fight for working families. It is the middle class that makes our country strong.

We will always put people over politics. We will always put people first.

KEEPING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. SPARTZ) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SPARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight an ongoing problem with our institution, which starts reminding one of a theater full of actors, a circus, or a dog-and-pony show with a lot of messaging, grandstanding, demagoguing, talking points, but no real results badly needed for the American people.

When Benjamin Franklin was leaving the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and was asked what kind of government the delegates had created, he replied: "A republic, if you can keep it."

It has been over 200 years since that time, but do we really appreciate what it means to have a constitutional republic, the rule of law, presumption of innocence, and proper due process?

As someone who grew up under a dictatorship in the Soviet Union, I cherish these freedoms tremendously, and I understand how hard it is to get them back when you lose them and how many people have died for them.

Therefore, regardless of politics, I will vigorously defend our Constitution and our rights for all Americans. Congress is not a kangaroo court and has proper committees, like Ethics or Judiciary, to provide proper due process to all individuals, whether it is President Trump and Representative GREENE or President Biden and Representative OMAR.

I adamantly argued last Congress as a member of the Judiciary Committee to provide this due process, so I am not planning to become a hypocrite now and lose this credibility. We have to become the adults in the room and stop the bread and circuses in Congress.

No one is above the law, but no one is below the law.

HONORING HARVEY DRAHOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. STRICKLAND) for 5 minutes.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Harvey Drahos, a beloved World War II veteran who lives in the South Puget Sound of Washington State.

A member of America's Greatest Generation, he joined the military in 1943 and rose to the rank of technician fifth grade.

Like many of our World War II heroes, Mr. Drahos was wounded on the front lines, and as the Battle of Okinawa went on, he made a promise: If I survive, I vow to help people.

Like many of his generation, he made serving our great Nation and its citizens a cornerstone of his life's work.

Post-military service, he served on multiple service organization boards and dedicated 53 years of active community service and leadership to Washington State.

One piece of Mr. Drahos' story that stood out to me is that while on the battlefield in Japan, he recovered a cherished photo album. After decades of searching for the family it belonged to, he was able to get it back to the Nakamoto family in Okinawa. This selfless act helped a family reunite with their past loved ones, transcending the boundaries of war with a kind act of humanity.

Madam Speaker, Harvey Drahos exemplifies courage, selfless service, and

love for others. He recently celebrated his 100th birthday and is the last living member of his World War II military unit. I am honored and proud to recognize him for his service in combat and his love and compassion for our Nation.

CONGRATULATING ALFIE ALVARADO-RAMOS

Ms. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lourdes "Alfie" Alvarado-Ramos, who will retire at the end of this month as director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

I congratulate Alfie on an exemplary and distinguished career serving the American people and my fellow Washingtonians for more than five decades.

Alfie enlisted in the Army in 1971, rising to the rank of troop command sergeant major at Madigan Army Medical Center, part of Joint Base Lewis-McChord in my district.

After retiring from the military in 1993, Alfie joined the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and has served as its director for the last decade. Under her leadership, the department was recognized as the leading State veterans affairs department in the entire Nation, offering the largest portfolio of services.

Madam Speaker, throughout her career, Alfie has broken barriers and empowered the next generation of soldiers to lead at the highest levels of military and public service. More importantly, she has been instrumental in making sure that our veterans are never forgotten.

I thank Director Alvarado-Ramos for her selfless service to our veterans, the State of Washington, and our Nation. She is a true patriot indeed.

CELEBRATE LITERACY WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEAN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to wish you and all Americans a happy Celebrate Literacy Week.

The Florida Department of Education has designated this week as a week to focus on reading, but you don't have to be from Florida to celebrate reading. All Americans can work to inspire students and families to make reading a part of their daily routines and install a lifelong love of reading.

This year's theme is "Take a Deep Dive Into Literacy—Splash Into New Worlds." Fitting with the theme, I was honored and proud to read "Pirate Pete's Talk Like a Pirate" to the fourth grade classes at Yulee Elementary School in northeast Florida.

Yulee Elementary School is an outstanding, rated-A school based on the Florida School Accountability Reports. This school is led by Principal Bryce Cubbal and Assistant Principal Tara Libby. These educators are to be commended for the fantastic things they are doing for our students.

Madam Speaker, they say reading is fundamental, but I will say that it is